

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 1544

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, UR, US
SUBJECT: US-SOVIET POLICY UNDER THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION:
III. THE IMMEDIATE AGENDA

1. SUMMARY. THE DIPLOMATIC AGENDA THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN PROPOSING AND DEFINING SINCE ELECTION DAY - SALT, PROGRESS IN OTHER ARMS CONTROL AREAS, CSCE, THE MIDDLE EAST - IS BASICALLY A RECYCLED VERSION OF THEIR AGENDA FOR THE AUTUMN OF 1975, AFTER HELSINKI AND SINAI II, BUT THE ENVELOPE IS NOVEL: A MASSIVE PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN INDIGNANTLY REFUTING WESTERN CONCERNS OVER SOVIET INTENTIONS AND ATTEMPTING TO PIN THE BLAME FOR STASIS ON THE U.S. WHILE WE HOPE WESTERN AUDIENCES WILL NOT BE DELUDED, SOVIETS THEMSELVES MAY BE. MANY ISSUES WHICH ARE PIVOTAL TO U.S. -- RESTRAINT IN THIRD AREAS, PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT, BERLIN AND HUMAN RIGHTS - ARE IN FACT OMITTED. WE RECOMMEND AN EARLY SERIES OF HIGH LEVEL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AFFIRMATIONS OF THE NEW
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ADMINISTRATION'S APPROACH TO U.S. - SOVIET RELATIONSHIP. THESE STATEMENTS WOULD APPLY THE FOREIGN POLICY BALANCE OF THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS, WITH ITS STRESS ON BOTH ARMS CONTROL AND HUMAN RIGHTS, SPECIFICALLY TO OUR RELATIONS WITH USSR, AND EXPLAIN OUR VIEW OF INTERNATIONAL PRIORITIES AND INTERPLAY OF COOPERATION AND COMPETITION WITH THE SOVIET UNION SO AS TO LEAVE NO DOUBT, AS WE PREPARE TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE SOVIETS, THAT WE HAVE BEEN ACTING IN GOOD FAITH FROM THE VERY BEGINNING. END SUMMARY.

2. SINCE ELECTION DAY THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN CAREFULLY TAILORING

THEIR COMMENTS ON EAST-WEST ISSUES SO AS TO CENTER WESTERN ATTENTION ON THE DIPLOMATIC AGENDA THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE DISCUSSED IN 1977, AND TO PORTRAY THE U.S. AS SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LAGGING PACE IN U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS. THIS EFFORT HAS FEATURED SEVERAL EXTRAORDINARY STATEMENTS BY BREZHNEV HIMSELF -- TO THE TRADE AND ECONOMIC COUNCIL IN NOVEMBER, TO KINGSBURY-SMITH IN DECEMBER, AND TO THE NEW ADMINISTRATION, FROM TULA, ON THE EVE OF ITS INAUGURATION. WHILE THE JAN 18 TULA STATEMENT PURPORTED TO SURVEY INTERNATIONAL ISSUES ACROSS THE SPECTRUM, IT WAS IN FACT AIMED AT WASHINGTON, BOTH IN DIRECT ADDRESS AND IN THE SHAPE OF THE AGENDA IT SOUGHT TO DEFINE.

3. FOR SOVIET COMMENTATORS, THE U.S.-SOVIET AGENDA HAS ONE URGENT ITEM: "SALT, AND THEN WE'LL SEE." BREZHNEV AT HIS MOST AUTHORITATIVE IN TULA, NAMED SALT, NON-PROLIFERATION, MBFR, THE CSCE BELGRADE MEETINGS AND THE MIDDLE EAST (STARTING WITH GENEVA), IN THAT ORDER. EARLIER, HE HAD USED THE OCCASION OF THE TRADE AND ECONOMIC COUNCIL TO REITERATE THE CONSISTENT SOVIET DEMAND THAT THE U.S. CONDUCT TRADE WITH THE USSR ON A NON-DISCRIMINATORY BASIS. THROUGHOUT, HOWEVER, WHAT THE SOVIETS BASICALLY WANT HAS BEEN CLEAR FOR ALL THE WORLD TO SEE: GET AN EARLY SALT AGREEMENT, KEEP THE DOOR OPEN FOR OTHER ARMS CONTROL MEASURES, AND RECOUP THEIR "FAIR" SHARE OF THE MIDDLE EAST ACTION.

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4. SINCE THE AGENDA ITSELF IS ESSENTIALLY THE SAME ONE THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN PROMOTING SINCE HELSINKI AND SINAI II, IN THE AUTUMN OF 1975, ITS MOST REMARKABLE FEATURE IS THE MASSIVE PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN IN WHICH IT IS ENVELOPED. THIS CAMPAIGN ATTEMPTS TO REBUT WESTERN ALLEGATIONS AND ALLAY WESTERN CONCERNS REGARDING SOVIET MILITARY CAPABILITIES AND INTENTIONS, THROUGH SIMPLE DENIAL ENDLESSLY REPEATED. THE SOVIETS HAVE PLAYED AS MANY VARIATIONS ON THIS THEME AS THEY COULD WITHOUT BREAKING THROUGH THE TOUGH SKIN OF SECRECY WHICH SURROUNDS MILITARY MATTERS HERE.

5. WE HOPE THAT WESTERN POLITICAL OPINION WILL NOT BE DULUDED BY THIS EFFORT, BUT SEE SOME POSSIBILITY THAT THE SOVIETS MAY FALL VICTIM TO THEIR OWN PROPAGANDA. IT IS THEREFORE VITAL THAT WE MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE AGENDA THEY ARE ATTEMPTING TO SHAPE EXCLUDES OR IGNORES A NUMBER OF ISSUES WHICH ARE PIVOTAL TO U.S.: RESTRAINT IN THIRD AREAS, BERLIN, PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL CONDUCT, AND THE ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

6. WE SEE GOOD REASONS FOR TAKING AN EARLY OPPORTUNITY TO AFFIRM PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY AT A HIGH LEVEL THE NEW ADMINISTRATION'S APPROACH TO THE US-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP. BEFORE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION REACH THE DECISION STAGE IN A NUMBER OF AREAS LATER THIS YEAR, WE SHOULD REMIND THE SOVIETS, OUR ALLIES AND

OUR PUBLIC THAT 1) WE ARE NEGOTIATING IN GOOD FAITH FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, 2) THAT THE ESSENTIAL ISSUES IN THE U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP, AS WE DEFINE THEM, ARE INTEGRALLY AND INEXTRICABLY RELATED, AND 3) THAT THE FINE FOREIGN POLICY BALANCE OF THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS, WITH ITS STRESS BOTH ON ARMS CONTROL AND HUMAN RIGHTS, APPLIES SPECIFICALLY IN THE U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP, AS WELL AS IN OUR CONDUCT OF FOREIGN RELATIONS GENERALLY.

7. WE WOULD SUGGEST THAT THE CONTENT OF HIGH LEVEL REMARKS
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INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

-- EXPLANATION OF PURPOSE: TO CLARIFY THE PRINCIPLES AND AIMS GOVERINING OUR APPROACH TO THE U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP, AND TO PLACE THIS RELATIONSHIP IN THE LARGER CONTEXT OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S FOREIGN POLICY GOALS.

-- DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTEXT: WHILE OUR FIRST PRIORITY IS ENHANCED COOPERATION AND CONSULTATION WITH ALLIES AND FRIENDS WITH WHOM WE SHARE VALUES, AND WHILE OUR TRADITIONS GIVE US A STRONG PREFERENCE FOR SOCIETIES SHARING OUR COMMITMENT TO INDIVIDUAL HUMAN RIGHTS, WE ARE ALSO DETERMINED TO WORK TOWARD DURABLE WORLD PEACE. IT IS THEREFORE INCUMBENT ON US TO IDENTIFY THOSE AREAS WHERE U.S. AND SOVIET INTERESTS PRESENTLY OVERLAP, EVEN THOUGH THE GAP BETWEEN OUR RESPECTIVE VIEWS OF MAN, SOCIETY AND INTERNATIONAL ORDER REMAINS ENORMOUS.

-- LABELING THE RELATIONSHIP: ONE WORD OR PHRASE CANNOT APPREHEND THE COMPLEXITIES OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE USSR, AND WE ARE MORE INTERESTED IN REALITIES THAN IN CODE EXPRESSIONS -- "PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE," "DETENTE," "PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH" -- WHICH TEND TO TAKE ON A LIFE OF THEIR OWN. FOR EXAMPLE, USE OF "PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE" IMPLIES ACCEPTANCE OF THE SOVIET VIEW OF U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS, "DETENTE" HAS BEEN THE OBJECT OF POLITICAL CONTROVERSY AND CONJURES UP MEMORIES OF THE LAST TWO ADMINISTRATIONS, AND "PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH" IS TOO CLOSE TO "FROM POSITIONS OF STRENGTH," A PHRASE WHICH GRATES ON SOVIET SENSITIVITIES (THOUGH IT OF COURSE SPECIFIED THE CORRECT APPROACH IN FACT); IT IS BETTER TO AVOID ADOPTION OF A SINGLE LABEL AND TO SPEAK GENERALLY OF "U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS."

-- PRIORITIES: WE ARE COMMITTED TO SHAPING A STABLE, JUST AND PEACEFUL WORLD ORDER, AND IT IS THIS COMMITMENT WHICH UNDERLIES OUR RESOLVE TO WORK FOR SOLUTIONS WHICH SUPPORT THIS GOAL, AND AGAINST THOSE WHICH THREATEN IT. THE ARMS CONTROL EFFORT WILL RECEIVE TOP PRIORITY. BUT WE MUST ALSO ADDRESS PROBLEMS OF
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INTERNATIONAL MISUNDERSTANDING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, WORLD

HEALTH, HUNGER, THE ENVIRONMENT, AND FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN DIGNITY AND FREEDOM. IN CLOSE CONSULTATION AND COOPERATION WITH OUR ALLIES AND FRIENDS, WE SHALL ASSESS OUR POSTURE VIS-A-VIS THE USSR IN LIGHT OF SOVIET PERFORMANCE IN WHAT SHOULD BE A COMMON EFFORT TO ADDRESS ALL THESE PROBLEMS TOGETHER.

-- CONFLICT AND COOPERATION: MUCH OF THE COMPLEXITY OF THE U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP STEMS FROM THE FACT THAT THE SOVIET SYSTEM OPENLY POSES A DIRECT CHALLENGE TO OUR OWN, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME SEEKING TO COOPERATE WITH US IN CERTAIN SPECIFIC FIELDS. WE ACCEPT THIS CHALLENGE, NO LESS THAN THE CHANCE TO COOPERATE WHERE COOPERATION IS CLEARLY BENEFICIAL TO BOTH COUNTRIES AND THE WORLD. IN WORKING WITH THE SOVIETS WHERE OUR INTERESTS COINCIDE, WE CLEARLY DO NOT ACCEPT THE OUTLOOK AND DOMESTIC PRACTICES OF THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP, ANY MORE THAN THEY ACCEPT OUR VIEW OF THE WORLD AND OUR DOMESTIC SYSTEM. WHEN IT COMES TO SYSTEMIC COMPETITION, HOWEVER -- THE JUDGMENT OF MAKING AS TO WHICH IS THE WAVE OF THE FUTURE, AND WHICH IS UNJUST, OUTMODED AND ON THE DECLINE -- WE HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR, ON THE CONTRARY.

-- ANGOLA AND BERLIN. THE SOVIETS WANT TO PASS OFF ANGOLA AS A ONE-SHOT EXCEPTION WHICH IS NOW OVER, AND OUR REACTION TO GDR STEPS TO ALTER THE STATUS OF EAST BERLIN AS EXAGGERATED. WE SHOULD REMIND THEM THAT THE MEMORY OF ANGOLA STILL INFLUENCES CONGRESSIONAL AND PUBLIC ATTITUDES STRONGLY AND THAT SOVIET BACKING OF RECENT GDR MOVES ON BERLIN TAKEN DURING A CHANGE OF U.S. ADMINISTRATION RUNS THE RISK OF BRINGING THE "GERMAN PROBLEM" TO THE FOREFRONT OF EAST-WEST TRANSACTIONS, THEREBY COMPLICATING OUR EFFORTS TO RESOLVE OTHER MAJOR ISSUES.

-- SUMMITRY. AS BEFORE, THE SOVIETS WOULD PLAN TO EXPLOIT A SUMMIT SO AS TO ENHANCE THEIR IMAGE AS OUR COEQUALS, DEMONSTRATE TO THEIR SATELLITES THAT THE ROAD TO WASHINGTON IS THROUGH MOSCOW, AND GIVE RISE TO CONCERNS BY U.S. ALLIES OF A DEAL OVER CONFIDENTIAL

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THEIR HEADS. WE SHOULD THEREFORE CLEARLY SIGNAL THE SOVIETS THAT THEY WILL NOT GET A SUMMIT UNTIL THEY HAVE EARNED IT BY INCLUDING ON THEIR AGENDA AND DEMONSTRATING WILLINGNESS TO MOVE FORWARD ON THE ADDITIONAL "MISSING" ISSUES WHICH WE CONSIDER PIVOTAL -- INTERDEPENDENCE, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR IN THE THIRD WORLD.

8. DEPARTMENT REPEAT AS DESIRED.
TOON

UNQUOTE VANCE

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